

The Omen

Through it all,
we're there for you

Journal Entry: April 7th....

*On the road to nowhere,
Omen in hand.*



The Omen

Volume 5, Number 9
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Policy Box!

The Omen accepts from any member of the Hampshire community. We will not edit anything you write, as long as you are willing to be responsible for what you say. Libel, which we personally find amusing and entertaining for countless hours is just not able to be printed in this forum.

Submissions, which includes just about anything involving the Hampshire community in some way (news, opinions, artwork, etc.), are due on Saturday nights at 8:00 to the editor of the section in which you wish to appear, or to Ben Sanders (E-307, box 710), Jonathan Land (E-311, box 527), or Dave Wilcox (Mod 56, take a walk to Enfield, you bastards, box 865). We prefer submissions on disk (IBM or HIGH DENSITY Macintosh), although hard copy (on paper, dumbass) is okay as well. Label your stuff well and it will make it back to you with no problem.

So give us your news, commentary, short fiction, comics, satire, poetry, art, bulletins, questions, and anything else you can think of, and your beloved community rag will dish it back 250 times. What better way to be heard?

'You flatlinin', you flatlinin''
-Flavor Flav

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Editorial *

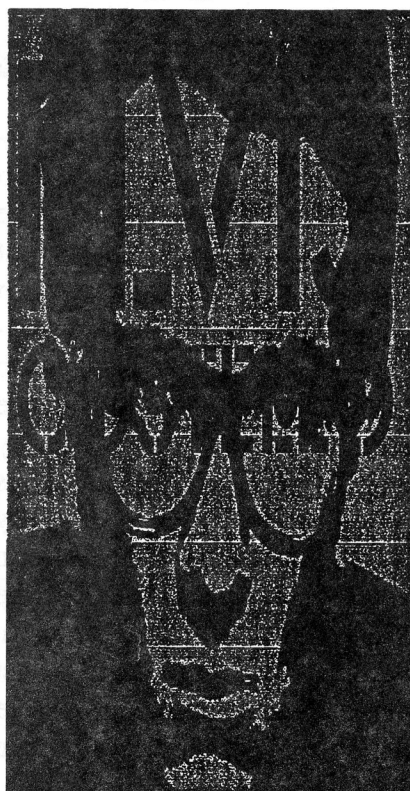
Elvis Is King!

"The little girl you dangled on your knee without mishap,/ Stirs something in your memory and something in your lap."

- "The World and His Wife" **Elvis Costello**

This quote comes from a song about your average dysfunctional, drunken family, and I think it's damn clever. I am a huge Elvis Costello fan. I own 17 of his 18 albums (I'm missing *Blood and Chocolate*). What I don't understand is this: How come Costello isn't much more popular than he is in America.

Elvis Costello is arguably the most intelligent lyricist in popular music today. Early in his career he claimed to write songs only on topics generated by guilt and anger. I don't know if he would still claim that, but after almost twenty years, he still has a strong bite. For instance: The line "Sometimes I phone you when I know you're not lonely, but I always disconnect it in time." from *No Action* is the perfect summation of jealous courting. Sometimes he exudes sheer cleverness. "So in this almost empty gin palace, through a two-way looking glass, you see your Alice"-*Beyond Belief*. He is also capable of "nice" imagery: "I



sleep with my fists clenched tight, when I don't lie awake at night." from *Tears Before Bedtime*. Costello is hands-down an amazing lyricist.

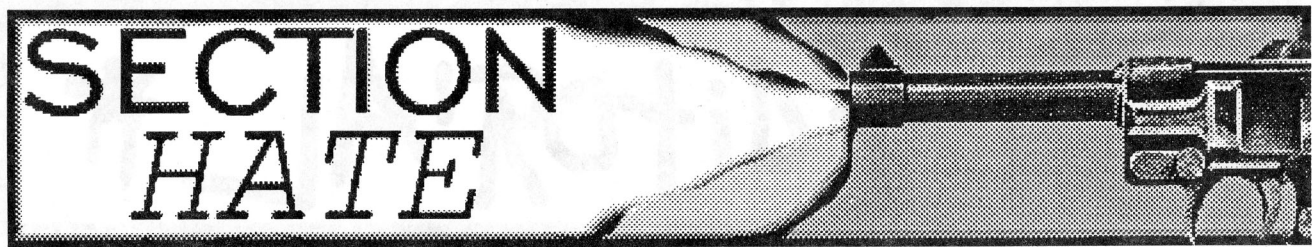
Musically, Elvis Costello exudes a higher level of sophistication than just about anyone else in popular music. First of all, his on and off (but mostly on) band, The Attractions are three of the most talented and proficient musicians out there. If you want proof, just listen to *Lipstick Vogue* 's insanely paced rhythm section (Bruce Thomas-bass, Pete Tho-

mas-drums, no relation), or the harpsicord line on *You Little Fool*, courtesy Steve Nieve (pronounced Naive). Together, Elvis Costello and the Attractions are capable of creating the most lilt-ing, smooth ballads to the most raucous, frenzied kick-ass-type songs. Even without the Attractions on albums like *Spike*, *Mighty Like a Rose*, and most obviously *The Juliet Letters* featuring the Brodsky Quartet, Costello always surrounds himself with good, talented musicians, and the results are good, powerful songs.

If one would be inspired to pick up an Elvis Costello album, I would highly recommend *IbMePdErRoIoAmL* (that's Imperial Bedroom, but it's actually spelled like that all over the album, and *This Year's Model*. The former is an interesting sounding album (produced by Costello and Geoff Emerick-the guy who produced *Sgt. Pepper*) with lots to offer, and the latter is his historical second album, which captures a roudy Elvis Costello and the Attractions in their youth.

I hate to sound preachy, but go out and buy, buy, buy kids.

Jonathan Land
Managing Editor
The Omen



New York, Hippies and The

Constitution

I suppose that this topic has been, or soon will be, very tiresome to most of you, but to be true to one's own heart is to be human - which happens to be one of my many flaws. Nevertheless, I do wish to mention several things that have been on my mind since the coming of Spring, its disappearance, and its subesquent reappearance...and recent redisappearance, et cetera.

1) I was in New York City today. If that city has a preponderance of anything, it is child molesters. They are simply everywhere. It's easy to tell them; they just look like they love kids. I guess the white collar gives them away.

2) With the coming of warm weather, we should all be considerate of our fellow compatriots in learning and follow a few simple rules. Hippies, please bathe, or at least stay the hell away from me. On second thought, stay the hell away from me anyway; I honestly don't mind most of you personally, but you're positively unbearable in groups. You can't sing, play guitar, or pound rhythmically on drums. Even if you could, midnight to 3 a.m. is not an acceptable time, nor is the quad an acceptable place.

Morbidly obese

people should not where revealing clothing. It is unpleasant to privy to. You have rights to be cool just as the rest of us do, but exercise some discernment when dressing. I propose the development of a committee designed to formalize regulations for the tasteful dressing of the morbidly obese. While weight regulations would be useless, perhaps they could base their decisions on loose cellulite roiling off of the body, or on simple thigh/ass girth.

Everybody else, get bent. You're all nuts and take me far more seriously than I take myself.

3) For those of you that aren't yet foaming, or who are waiting for me to hang myself, I am afraid that I must disappoint you. Many of you might be aware that a new College Constitution is in the process of being passed. Actually, it seems that it is nowhere near being passed, although the various governmental bodies are trying to convince themselves that it is. There are two options up for consideration, one written by Bob Rakoff and Jay Garfield, and the other is (or will be) a joint Community Council and Senate version. The

former outlines a frightening centralization of power whereby an executive faculty committee, consisting of four members (one from each school), has control over all decisions concerning the campus, including health and safety, curriculum and housing, and on and on. The existing governmental organizations will be reduced to mere advisory roles, and can ultimately be ignored if their recommendations fail to suit the inclinations of the four member decision board. As far as I understand it, it will take an act of god to overturn one of their decisions.

The other revision, yet to be finalized by a committee of CC and Senate members is not nearly as ludicrous, but just as self-serving. The Senate will be replaced by an Educational Policy Committee, which will do essentially what the Senate was designed to do; the Senate will be killed. As it stands now, both groups exist, with the EPC pretty much doing the Senate's fuction already. One should be killed if they are both to maintain the same function, but the EPC never should have been created if it was merely to work as the Senate does. Although I am a senator, I'm not altogether sure that we are doing anything but trying to pass the

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A Senator Vents His Rage

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revised Constitution and then dying out, but the one never should have been created without immediately killing the other. Just another example of bureaucracy perpetuating itself right where we live.

The CC, meanwhile, is trying to appropriate for itself authority that it has no business taking over, such as health and safety. I don't consider myself versed enough in such areas to assume legislative responsibilities regarding them, and I have the same opinion of most of the members of the CC.

Excepting those two minor examples, the entire document is a travesty of legislative red-tape, people sticking their noses where they don't belong, and basic blind self-service. Minus a few small adjustments, the revised constitution just upholds the current status quo of campus government. Very little will change, administration will still have much too much control over our daily lives, and the students will have no say in how our school is run. At least the Garfield-Rakoff constitution was radical departure from our current one, albeit not the departure that we need.

I propose the following (although it is not my original idea, I bring it to you, the oppressed):

We need a four-armed system of government consisting of the students, the faculty, the staff, and the administration. The administration will administer the decisions of the

other three, and very little else. It will work towards the smooth implementation of legislation, but it will not be able to legislate itself. The students and faculty will see to curriculum, general educational concerns, and the faculty itself (the faculty will see to hiring; reappointments will be the purview of the faculty and the students - let's face it, there are some shitty professors here, but the faculty doesn't have to take classes with them). The staff will deal with health and safety concerns, and all of the mundane things that we all take for granted. There are field specialists for a reason. Let's take advantage of somebody else's career choice when it means that they can deal with things that we know little about.

4) There has been much talk recently over the internet regarding my own writing style, grammar, spelling, and all of the little things that make written communication possible. They

are necessary. There are people that can communicate very real things by using our language in an unconventional manner; they are not the people flaming me over the telephone lines, and I have yet to run across one who is still a student here, although I know of several that have graduated. English is one of the richest languages in the world. Maybe some of you should learn to use and appreciate the language of your own **speech before you consign it to the shit-pile as an obsolete mode of written communication.**

Oh, and by the way, before you respond irritably to the first half of this little article, maybe you should consider why this section is called *Section Hate*, and not *I Love Everybody*. And if any of you happen to know, you might consider the origin of the term "Devil's Advocate."

Shit, fuck, piss, cock-sucker, cunt, tits, and a big ball o' damnation.

AARON MULVANY

Mount Holoke Student Dance Concert

Apr. 13 @ 8 pm, Apr. 15 @ 2 pm and
8pm

\$4, \$3 Students and Seniors

Get With the Times, Loser!

Author's Note: The views and opinions expressed in the following article are not necessarily those of The Omen, Hampshire College, or, for that matter,

Notes From Limboland

the author himself - he might just be making all of this up. Who's to tell? As always,, objects in the mirror are closer than they appear. Now, get on with already. I'm sick of writing in italics.

If you've been to the Hampshire Mall recently, and you have - just by chance, mind you - found yourself wandering in the wonder that is the food court (or "Cafe Square", as the management would have us call it), you have probably noticed that red neon tubes seemingly exploding out of the wall above the exquisite China Panda and a riotous group of eight-year-olds congregated in a huge, noisy clump in front of what used to be the handicapped-access elevator to the management offices. You have also probably noticed the loud pseudo-industrial music that was not there a couple of weeks ago. Then again, if you're not blind, you've probably also noticed the big sign that screams, in the glory that is the inert gas: "LASER STORM, The Ultimate Laser Tag Game." And that, my friends, is exactly what I'm talking about.

I'm talking about the resurgence of laser tag, and its new

invasion of the Happy Valley.

Whoa. That last sentence sounded a tad nefarious, didn't it? I mean, invasion is rather a strong word. Maybe that's not the best word for it . . . but I can't really think of a better one right now, so screw it. I'm moving on. Join me.

Laser tag. Those three syllables conjure up, for me, a host of images from my childhood and adolescence. The first laser tag craze. Remember when the first sets came out? They were some sixty bucks a pop - and that was just for the "phaser" and belt target. I don't even know if you can get the original "Laser Tag" sets anymore. I know that, as of a few years ago, they cost about fifteen bucks a set - but that was because the craze had worn off by then. Hey, do y'all remember the laser tag cartoon? Saturday mornings, ABC, if I'm not mistaken. Chintzy sci-fi that only loosely incorporated the product from whence it got its title into the plots (and I use that word vaguely). Goddamn, those were the days.

But laser tag has, of late, enjoyed a rebirth of sorts. Laser tag "arenas", or indoor playing areas where equipment and obstacles are provided for a modest fee, are popping up all over the place. There's a fairly big one that opened up in Worcester a few months back, also a Laser Storm franchise. And, of course, there is our own little Laser Storm right here betwixt the Five Col-

leges that just opened . . . and already it's become immensely popular, and not only with the youngsters. I've seen many a college student (and quite a few actual "adults") in line waiting to blast the virtual brains out of "the enemy." I must confess that I have been one of them. I suppose that's why I'm writing about it.

Having shelled out my three bucks for a game on several occasions now, I have become convinced of something, and that something is this: laser tag is, to put it simply, cool. Let me pontificate. It's rad. It's bad. It's down. It's hip. It's happenin'. It's gnarly [sic?]. It is fun, even. Good, clean, blood-thirsty, murderous, all-American fun.

Laser tag is also an immensely effective stress reliever. Hell, what else can you do that gives you the satisfaction of "killing" someone, without having to go through the messy details of actual murder? I can't think of anything that fits that bill. Laser tag is perfect for stress reduction. You can get out your aggressions without ever hurting anyone. And I don't give a rat's ass if people see laser tag as a contributor to the increasing violence we see in America today. To those people I say, "Try it." Once you've held that "phaser" in your hand and then blasted an opponent all to hell, there's no going back. Any thoughts about society's ills just go flying out the window as you

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Ohh... Tag Me With Your Phaser

Continued from previous page

embrace the human animal lurking inside you.

And to those that would say that laser tag glorifies the use of guns . . . sorry, it's been done for years. I think we've got to face facts and admit to ourselves that guns have been a large part of American social culture for decades. Laser tag may be a product of that fascination we have, but it is not a contributor. But, of course, these would be the same poops who say that television violence is producing generation upon generation of Americans desensitized to actual violence and the use of guns, blah blah blah. Well, I've got news: blame ourselves. We wanted it. Television is dominated by its audience, and what its audience wants, its audience gets. Conversely, what its audience doesn't want, its audience doesn't get. Of course, this says bad things about the general public ("Family Matters" - the Erkel show - was popular for way too many years) but that's not the point. Of course, neither is the majority of this paragraph. Back to the topic

Jon's Journal

at hand . . .

Laser tag, in a safe, anaesthetized way, brings out our base nature - that is, the uncivilized animal that resides in us all, and that we have no hope of ever truly denying. Try all you want, you can never fully erase the murderous impulses, the unreasoning anger and hatred, the sudden, inexplicable urges to beat and pummel and hurt other living things - all these things make us human, coupled with our capacity to love and care about others, our ability to think and speak and utilize logic, et cetera. Talk about peace and love and harmony until your blue in the face, you can never get rid of the stupid animal from which we descend. Nor should we really try to. If you deny pain, you deny pleasure. If you deny evil, you deny good. If you deny the "savage", you deny civilization. None of these can exist without the other. Think about it.

Okay, I think I've philosophized enough now. I really didn't intend this to be a treatise on American culture, et al., but, what the hell, I just follow where my brain leads me. One last

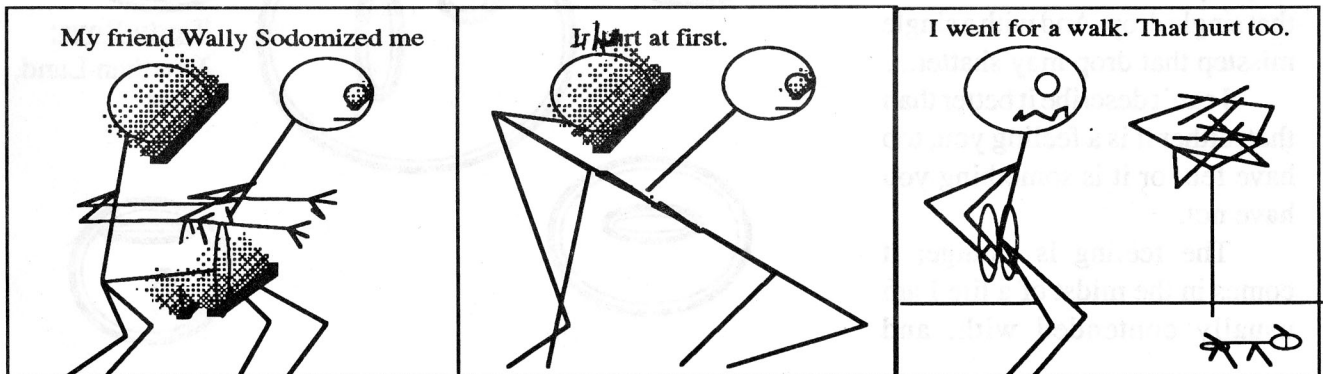
thing before I sign off: if you get a chance to, try out this Laser Storm stuff. It really is immensely fun. And try to go when there's not a lot of little kids there, because, for some reason that I have yet to figure out for myself, little kids are so much better at this stuff than we are. They have that bizarre tenacity witnessed only in the young that makes them unstoppable. They're like little Terminators when they get into the arena. But, yet again, I digress.

Anyway, that's it from Limboland this week. If you love/like/dislike/really fucking hate anything (like I care) feel free to respond - intelligently and specifically, please - by writing me on email at jobF92@hamp.hampshire.edu. Or write something for The Omen. It's your rag - use it.

So, remember, kiddies: keep your feet on the ground, but keep reaching for those oh-so-elusive stars.

Thppth.

Josh Brassard
Notes From Limboland



Restlessness

Sometimes it is useful to ask questions that don't have answers.

Spring is coming. Not quite here yet- but the color of the light, the evenings that grow

Thoughts After Midnight

longer, hint at its arrival. During the winter, I and my friends lived behind drawn curtains: we woke at night and ventured outside only briefly, braced against the wind. We brooded on the things that had haunted us during the months before, and let friendships grow stale, or at least change.

But with spring, there is an opening that comes. I find myself, as I walk across campus, taken with a certain longing. It is a desire that comes without name or object, a vague yearning for the things that may or may not lie over the horizon. It is a feeling that brings with it a kind of fear: suddenly I feel as if I am walking across the surface of a drop of water, everything I know in this small college world held together only by the surface tension of that single drop. And with a single misstep that drop may shatter....

I can't describe it better than that; either it is a feeling you, too have felt, or it is something you have not.

The feeling is strange; it comes in the midst of a life I am usually contended with, and

brings with it discontent. I am happy with my life, or at least close to it- but when the feeling comes it hints at something that might be better.

It whispers: is happiness enough? Or are the dramas and symphonies that might, somewhere, exist, the adventures of the world, better?

I have no answers to these questions. The happiness of small, everyday things that I have found is fragile beside the passions I might feel. It is not a question with an easy answer: while I am afraid to lose what I have, I want my life to be magnificent. The fear I feel is that, years from now, I will look back and realized that I settled for something mediocre, rather than living as best I was able.

The only answer I have found is this: to live well, in whatever fashion you choose. I may

never find the holy grail, or explore the reaches of the globe, but it seems to me that even a life of quiet success is a life well lived, as long as one makes every moment matter. To constantly be aware of one's own life, and the strangeness of the world we find ourselves in, is to live the adventure as certainly as is a solo ascent of Everest.

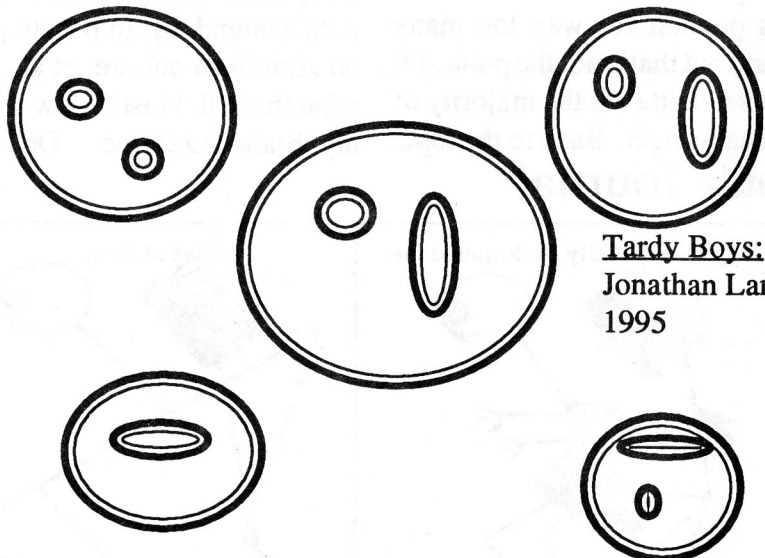
But even this answer is only half a solution- to grow restless, bored, to forget what one lives for is human nature. So a suggestion: when the feeling comes, when your everyday surroundings seem meaningless, go outside. Stand in the open air, and closing your eyes, breathe deep.

And after a moment, open your eyes, and look around. That's all.

Matthew Flaming

April 1995

Amherst, Massachusetts



Tardy Boys:
Jonathan Land,
1995



Archers of Loaf

Archers of Loaf - Vee Vee (alias).

This is the follow-up to the Archers' 1994 e.p., ... *Vs. the Greatest of All Time*, and follows the logical progression the band started on that record, away from the straight-forward guitar rock of 1992's *Icky Mettle*, to a weirder sound more reminiscent of Polvo. It was recorded by Bob Weston.

When I first listened to this album, I wasn't sure I liked the new sound of the band. It's definitely more dense than the band's earlier material, but underneath it all, there is still that pop framework which makes this so easy to listen to.

The opening track, "Step into the Light," is a perfect prelude to the disk, and pretty representative of the album as a whole - cool, rich intro over top of some really bizarre guitar. When the vocals finally come in, it's smooth, and really mellow, but way back in the mix is somebody frantically screaming - it's kinda like the rest of the album, which contains great pop songs with catchy lyrics, except they're almost all about hating somebody else, and sound like the guitars were passed through a blender.

Archers of Loaf can still rock out, too. Despite an opening lyric that sounds like "It's

Tricky," the second song, "Harnessed in Slums" is an amazing romp. The other upbeat songs are offset well by the slower ones like "Greatest of all Time" and "Floating Friends."

The lyrics, like the guitars, are getting weirder and weirder (some song titles: "Let the Loser Melt," "Underdogs of Nipomo," "Underachievers March and Fight Song.") "Greatest of All Time," which one of my friend's is sure is about the Van Halen/David Lee Roth split, has an opening line that goes "They caught and drown the frontman / of the world's worst rock n roll band / He was out of luck, cause nobody gave a fuck."

This has been my most listened-to cd of the last couple of weeks, and I like it more and more everytime I hear it. I don't think the Archers have released a bad song yet, and this clearly perpetuates that streak. I think you should buy it.

Vitapup/Kaia/Puggle @ Red Barn, Apr. 7.

Another one of the AMC shows, which are getting better and better. Unfortunately, they also keep getting later and later, so this one, which was supposed to start at 9:00, didn't start until about 10:30, I think. (Actually, it

wasn't their fault - Puggle, who were supposed to go first, didn't show up until later.)

So, Vitapup opened the festivities, and weren't really as good as I had expected them to be. They are a three-piece, and I feel that in that situation, the band must do everything to fill out the sound, which Vitapup didn't do. The drums were really loud, which made the bass and guitar sound a little wimpy. The guitarist did get some cool feedback noises, though, and there were a couple songs that were above average. While they played, an odd man spun lights behind their heads, which, in the end, was much more interesting. They have two singles out, one of which is on Thrill Jockey. I think they shine much better in the recording medium.

Kaia played next. Her "real" band is Team Dresch, out of the Northwest, who are enjoying a lot of success right now (they have a couple of releases, but I can't seem to remember where...probably K or Killrockstars). She played by herself with an acoustic guitar - which I was a little frightened of. Nice songs, some of the lyrics were dumb, but she talked to the

Continued on next page

Hey, Guess What? Saturday Night Live Still Sucks Hardcore!

White men can't do anything is what I learned from Damon Wayans's opening monologue. Also, I hate that stupid wind mime trick. Bathroom Mon-key seemed to have potential. Although it may have seemed like the poor guy was being viciously oppressed, let's just remember that he's just recently made his debut in *Outbreak*.

I guess you do have to be a special somebody to get on this show. However, no fat white man gratuitously licking a Dum-Dum while coming out of the closet, is going to make me laugh. At least Mr. Farley was good enough to keep his clothes on this time.

The music group was kinda chill, I think I heard them on the radio. Weekend Update was just like it says, weak. Jeff Foxworthy wouldn't even finish his repetitive punchlines because he even knew how crappy it was going. The image of people being drenched by saliva or vomit didn't even move me enough to smirk.

There was no reason for that sketch except to give Kevin Nealon a reason to punch his time card. The only thing that was really worth watching besides that Budwieser commercial with the frogs was maybe the O.J. trial. I know how played the topic is, but Anton Jackson helped add a dif-

ferent twist to the saga.

That circus whatever crap was just butt, but I must admit that seriously repetitive skit with Skittles with the Christopher Walkins wannabe wasn't all that shitty. But if a guy with candy in his hand can make you laugh by merely naming fruity flavors, you would have liked this show. And you're probably someone who likes to listen to canned vegetables.

MIKE ROBINSON

Crazy, Upside-Down
World: Jonathan Land, 1995

Music Review Cont.

Continued from previous page
crowd and was pretty nice.

The downside to the punk/DIY-ethic is that you give any kid a guitar, a I, IV, and V chord, and a Dischord sticker, and he thinks he's Ian Mackaye. This was the case with Puggle. Poor guys - the PA got all fucked up, too. For some strange reason, they reminded me of Counting Crows (really), so I left immediately. Dismissed! PEN PEEKUT

